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A

Marriage for Revenge:

A Drama

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY S. HOWELL.

NEW ORLEANS:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE PICAYUNE, 66 CAMP STREET.
1874.

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A

Marriage for Revenge:

A DRAMA

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY S. HOWELL.

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

Counselor Jeffries.
Merideth.
Captain Harry Grey.
Evremond.
Sergeant Patrick.
Notary.
Servants.

Lady Alice Grey.
Lady Mary Grey.
Abigail.
Lucy.
Susan.
Servant to Lady Mary.
Servant to Lady Alice.

Scene: Near London.

MARRIAGE FOR REVENGE.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*The Library Room of Jeffries. Susan discovered asleep by the fire.*

Jeffries. (Outside.) Susan, open the door.

Susan. (Rubbing her eyes.) Dear me, there is Mr. Jeffries, and my fine dream is spoiled. (Opens the door.)

Enter *Jeffries.* L. E.

Jeffries. Why, girl, what is the matter, you are up so late?

Susan. I was afraid to go to bed, sir.

Jeffries. Afraid; afraid of what,? I suppose you have been asleep?

Susan. No sir, I was not asleep, only dreaming.

Jeffries. Dreaming: what right have young girls to dream, I suppose it was about love and other nonsense.

Susan. People can't help what they dream about, sir.

Jeffries. Well, no matter, dream as you please, but keep such nonsense as love and matrimony out of your head.

Susan. I will try and do so, sir. (Aside.) I don't think I can.

Jeffries. Now, Susan go to bed and have me waked up at cock crow, I have important business to attend to.

Susan. The cocks have been crowing all night, sir, and I don't know when to tell the right one, but I will do my best to find out. (Exit, R. E.)

Jeffries. The Vice Chancellor is an ass. It will not take many decisions like he rendered to-day to topple over the liberties of this great Nation. Sir Harry Grey died before his daughter was born, his large estates reverted to his son Harry, but poor boy he is dead and gone. In the absence of the son, the daughter inherits; such are the laws of England, but the Vice

Chancellor decrees the property to Lady Mary Grey, the niece of Sir Harry; and his own daughter by this decision is disinherited and compelled to give up the estate.

Enter *Evremond.* L. E.

Evremond. You seem to be an early riser, Mr. Jeffries?

Jeffries. You are mistaken, Mr. Evremond, I am keeping late hours. My ward has lost her suit in court; the Vice Chancellor has decreed her property to her cousin, Lady Mary Grey.

Evremond. Can it be possible that such a decree has been given to deprive Lady Alice of her lawful property?

Jeffries. It is true, sir, and I fear a rehearing will not be granted, unless it can be proven that young Harry Grey is alive, which is hardly possible, considering his reported loss at sea twenty years ago.

Evremond. I am satisfied, Mr. Jeffries, you did all in your power to protect the interests of Lady Alice. If extra counsel would be of service in obtaining a rehearing, I would suggest the employment of it.

Jeffries. I believe I understand my profession, Mr. Evremond. If I thought extra counsel required I certainly would have obtained it. We must bide our time; something may yet turn up to save the property to the rightful owner. In the mean time I will advise Lady Alice to keep possession, and not give up the mansion unless put out by force.

Evremond. You will advise well, Mr. Jeffries; but I fear without avail.

Jeffries. Be it so, then, but all cannot be lost. Lady Alice will have her mother's portion to fall back upon, and that you know is very large.

Evremond. Only ten thousand pounds per annum, while the estate yields thirty.

Jeffries. Ten thousand pounds a year is enough to start a new married couple in life, and will provide for the numerous wants of a family, even a large one.

Evremond. Thirty thousand is better for the same purpose, Mr. Jeffries. (Jeffries turns away from him.) I fear I am detaining you, sir. I observe numerous papers on the table, and presume you have important business to attend to.

Jeffries. I must claim your indulgence, Mr. Evremond; my papers must be arranged before paying my visit to Lady Alice. (Sits by the table).

Evremond. Farewell, Mr. Jeffries. (Goes to the door.) Now, Lady Mary, you are mine. It was Lady Alice with the estate and love went with it; but the estate is lost, and now love must stand aside. I wed the estate, not the possessor of it.

(Aside and Exit. L. E.)

Jeffries (Looking around.) He is gone, and ill luck go with him. Evremond is of that class ever on the hunt for a fortune. He found one, but I fear has lost it; he will now go and press his suit to Lady Mary Grey, with what success I know not. According to agreement he marries Lady Alice on Thursday next, but that day will find him wanting. An hour's sleep will refresh me, and put me in proper trim to meet my ward. It is an interview I dread, but is necessary for my purpose to apply for a continuance of the suit. (Exit. R. E.)

SCENE 2.—*A small room in the house of Lady Mary Grey. Enter Lady Mary and servant, R. E.*

Lady Mary. Who brought this letter?

Servant. It was brought by a boy of the village. It did not come by post. (Exit. L. E.)

Lady Mary. 'Tis strange. (Reads.) Madam: The claim your father made to the estate of Sir Harry Grey has been brought to a close. The Vice-Chancellor decrees that, in the absence of the son, the estate goes to the brother, your father, from whom you inherit. Will send particulars by post. RODGERS, Solicitor.

What a surprise! By this decree I go from poverty to wealth, the two extremes of our lives. When my father died I ceased to think of the claim he had made for the estate. My cousin Alice, who has been good and kind to me, shall never say I wronged her. I will renounce all claim to it.

Enter *Servant.* L. E.

Servant. Mr. Evremond is at the door.

Lady Mary. An early visitor. Admit him. (Exit servant L.E.) This visit has a meaning. (Enter Evremond, L. E.) How am I to receive this early visit, Mr. Evremond? You absented your-

self from my house for the past two years, and a renewal of your visits I confess is a surprise to me.

Evremond. You need not be surprised, dear Lady Mary. I ask that my visit be received both as a friend and as a lover.

Lady Mary. You amaze me, Mr. Evremond, by this declaration, considering that we were once betrothed, but separated in our loves more than two years ago; you quit me then and became engaged to my cousin Alice. I felt the desertion at the time as keenly as one devoted as I was to you could feel, but I confess my devotion has given place to the most total indifference, and it is not my wish to have the scenes of our early loves again enacted.

Evremond. You are very plain in your language, Lady Mary. I came to renew our friendship, and if possible, our loves; and if both are gained to offer my heart and hand.

Lady Mary. And desert me as you did before, and intend doing to Lady Alice.

Evremond. Lady Alice has no claim on me.

Lady Mary. That is not proper language for you to use, Mr. Evremond, considering your engagement to my cousin, Lady Alice Grey.

Evremond. I intend breaking off the engagement, and have a letter written declining the marriage with your cousin.

Lady Mary. Then you are serious in your determination not to marry Lady Alice Grey? You forget that I am poor and Lady Alice has wealth.

Evremond. I am serious, Lady Mary, and prefer your poverty to the wealth of your cousin.

Lady Mary. This interview is painful to me, Mr. Evremond. I cannot do in haste what may cause a lifetime to repent. To-morrow I will give an answer to your proposal; in the meanwhile think well of what you are doing. I will leave you now, my solicitor is waiting for me in the adjoining room. (Exit R. E.)

Evremond. I think I have gained the day. Now for London, and to-night Lady Alice will get my letter declining the marriage. To-morrow I will return here and be accepted. If I lose Lady Mary, Lady Alice will be too glad to receive me back.

(Exit L. E.)

Enter *Lady Mary.* R. E.

Lady Mary. How often it is that those who were once loved, aye dearly loved, become repulsive to you. I loathe the sight of Evremond, not only for his treatment to me, but for his bad faith with my cousin Alice. I feigned an excuse to be rid of him. To-morrow he will get an answer to his proposal, and it will be one he will never forget. (Exit R. E.)

SCENE 3.—*The Woods on Lady Alice's Estate. A large oak in the rear under which Capt. Grey is sleeping. Sergeant Patrick sitting on a log close by. The family mansion seen in the distance.*

Patrick. (Rising.) Captain Harry is still sound asleep. He gave orders to be called at break of day, but as I am not on duty I will disobey them.

(Captain Grey comes forward.)

Capt. Grey. Patrick, I gave you orders to call me at daylight, and now the sun is well up.

Patrick. Your Honor did, but as I am not on duty, I preferred you to have a good sleep.

Capt. Grey. Well then, get ready for our journey; it is a long one, but we soldiers who have tramped through the sands and over the mountains of India need not fear the good turnpike roads of Old England.

Patrick. I am ready at call, sir.

Capt. Grey. Then rid yourself of part of your baggage. You will find in the trunk of the oak under which I slept an opening large enough for your purpose; you can place your bundle there with perfect safety. (Patrick goes to the tree.) I dread this long journey, but as a soldier in duty bound will perform it.

Patrick. (Coming forward.) Captain Harry, here is a letter directed to you, which I found in the hollow of the tree; somebody about here seems to know you.

Capt. Grey. Hand me the letter, and see if you can find anything more in the tree. (Patrick goes to the tree, Captain reads.)

My dear boy: Evremond has completely recovered, but I would advise you to remain concealed for a short time, then all

will be forgotten. I send you enclosed two hundred pounds; be prudent until I further advise you. JEFFRIES.

What a load is off my mind. A suspense of twenty years is now set at rest by the reading of this letter. I am no murderer then, and can walk my native land in safety and claim my inheritance. Sergeant, have you found any more papers?

Patrick. No more, Captain Harry.

Capt. Grey. Then go at once to the village close by, and take two seats in the coach. I have changed my mind about walking.

Patrick. You act wisely, captain.

Capt. Grey. The coach does not leave until nine; I will be with you in time. You can breakfast in the village.

Patrick. Your Honor must be acquainted about here.

Capt. Grey. Indeed I am, Sergeant. I was born in that large mansion you see at the end of the woods. Be off now; here is money for our passage; but wait till we find out who this is coming. (Jeffries enters L. E. reading a paper.) As I live it is my kind old friend and guardian Jeffries. I will salute him, but remain incog. (Goes up to Jeffries.) I do not wish to disturb you, sir; but how far are we from London?

Jeffries. Hallo, what have we here, gipseys or poachers?

Capt. Grey. We are neither, sir; only travellers bound to Liverpool on business of a private nature.

Jeffries. Then what are you doing on private lands? had you gone to the house you would have had comfortable quarters.

Capt. Grey. I preferred camping out. I have done it for twenty years.

Jeffries. I do not doubt what you say, sir; but you are liable to punishment as trespassers. These lands belong to Lady Alice.

Capt. Grey. Pray, Sir, who is Lady Alice?

Jeffries. Then you are indeed a stranger, not to know Lady Alice, daughter of Sir Harry Grey, deceased twenty years ago.

Capt. Grey. (Greatly surprised). Sir Harry Grey's daughter, did you say, sir?

Jeffries. Yes, sir, I did; and no one can doubt it; I was present at her birth. You seem surprised, sir?

Capt. Grey. I am. indeed. I knew Sir Harry had an only son, but never before heard of a daughter.

Jeffries. Listen, and I will tell you. Master Harry Grey, a fine boy of fifteen, quarrelled with a companion named Evremond. The boys were of the same age, but Harry the most powerful. Evremond seized a club to strike, but Harry with his fist brought him to the ground. The poor boy thought he had killed Evremond, ran away, and concealed himself on this very ground. I engaged to write to him, and deposited in the hollow of that oak a letter containing two hundred pounds, and recommended him to lay concealed until Evremond recovered.

Capt. Grey. (Aside) How will I recollect all this. (Loud) Did Evremond get well?

Jeffries. Yes, and is still alive and will soon marry Lady Alice Grey. But to continue: Harry did not get my letter, but became frightened, made his way to Liverpool on foot, took passage on a ship bound to the East Indies, and when nearing the coast the vessel was lost with all on board. The loss of his son so affected Sir Harry that he sickened and died soon after hearing of his son's death.

Capt. Grey. (Aside) My dear, dear father!

Jeffries. Lady Alice was born four months after the death of her father. I fear she will lose this fine estate. The absence of the son transfers the property to his brother, the only relative alive at the time of his death; so decrees the Vice-Chancellor. Lady Alice can only preserve the estate by the return of her brother Harry; but poor boy, he is dead and gone.

Capt. Grey. Is it certain that Harry Grey was lost at sea?

Jeffries. It is; his father's correspondents in India sent him clothing recognized as belonging to the boy.

Capt. Grey. Are you speaking of Harry Grey, the son of Sir Harry Grey, who owned this estate?

Jeffries. I am.

Capt. Grey. He is alive.

Jeffries. (Starting back in amazement.) Who are you, sir?

Capt. Grey. An officer in his Majesty's service stationed in India, but now on furlough.

Jeffries. I am glad to know you: my name is Jeffries, solicitor and guardian to Lady Alice Grey. Now what do you know of my boy Harry?

Capt. Grey. I simply know, sir, that your boy Harry, as you call him, is alive and well. We belong to the same regiment, mess and sleep together. I am now on my way to Liverpool, where I have important business to attend to. On my return I will see you at any place you may name, and promise to bring with me your boy, Harry Grey.

Jeffries. You speak like a man of truth, sir; meet me at my office not far off.

Capt Grey. I know where you reside, Mr. Jeffries.

Jeffries. Then do not fail to meet me: produce Harry Grey and your fortune is made.

Capt Grey. I have given my word, Mr. Jeffries, and promise to keep it. (Looks at his watch.) It is eight o'clock and the coach leaves at nine, giving me little time for preparation. Farewell! you will not be deceived in me.

(Exit with Patrick. L. E.)

Jeffries. Am I in a dream? Harry Grey alive, reported dead twenty years ago! Can such an event be possible? Yes, it is possible, and like a prudent lawyer will take my precaution. I can now make an application to the Vice Chancellor for a reversal of his decision, and to suspend the judgment until the truth is known. Lady Alice must keep possession. (Exit R. E.)

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—*The Library Room of Lady Alice. A round table in the middle of the stage, with a vase of flowers and papers on it.*

Enter *Lady Alice with a Letter* R. E.

Lady Alice. (reads) I cannot see you until evening, my dear child, and then will have bad news for you. The possessions of your dear father go from you to your cousin, Lady Mary Grey; such is the decree of the Vice Chancellor. Be of good cheer, my dear child; all may yet be well. JEFFRIES.

This is astounding news. Lose my estate where I was born and passed so many happy days. Can the laws of England be made

to set aside a daughter's claim to her father's possessions? I think they are not so unjust. Mr. Jeffries, I am satisfied, has done all in his power for me, and being in possession, I will remain in possession only to be removed by force. (Sits by the table.) Evremond is late this evening. (Looks at her watch.) Dear me! he is four hours later than his promise. I suppose he is at the club; that is a standing apology for want of punctuality. Let me see, this is Monday night: on Thursday we marry: only three days of freedom left, but what is freedom compared to the happiness of marrying the one you love. I wish Evremond would come, the little time left us for courtship will soon pass away. I want to see him now, to consult and advise with him about my estates; he may be sick and I away from him; I would send to his lodgings to inquire, but it would not look well in me to do so. Four hours later than last night, and all the other nights since his visits began; how would he like to be served in this way? (Rises and walks the stage.) Men are so unreasonable, they can't bear to be disappointed. If I were not ready when Evremond called, he was sure to chide me for my negligence, but look at him now, four hours behind our appointment, fie on such a man! I that have fortune, youth, and I think beauty, to be treated in this way. I could cry my eyes out with vexation, but I have too much pride to do so. I will pay you for this, Mr. Evremond: you are indifferent, I can be indifferent too (Sits.) Hark! he is now coming. (Jeffries approaches from the rear.) You have come at last, Mr. Evremond; I do not deserve such treatment, but I will forgive you on a promise not to do so any more. (Jeffries appears in front.) I am glad to see you, guardian, but I thought you were Evremond.

Jeffries. I came late, my child, to see you, and expected to find Mr. Evremond with you, but it seems he is away.

Lady Alice. I don't know where he can be so late; last night when he left he bid me be ready by six, it is now past ten.

Jeffries. (Aside.) As I expected, he is playing Lady Alice false. (Loud.) You may not see him to-night, my child.

Lady Alice. Not see him to-night, impossible! he may be negligent, but he has to much love for me to stay away a single

night. I will wait till the sun rises to see him, as I know pressing engagements alone have kept him away.

Jeffries. (Aside.) Infatuated girl, what a blow will follow when the truth is known!

Lady Alice. I did not expect you to-night, Mr. Jeffries, although you wrote to me you would come. Are my prospects now any brighter than they were when you wrote the letter.

Jeffries. I think they are. I am hardly at liberty to speak of an adventure I met with this morning, but this I will say to you, my child, appearances indicate that your brother is alive.

Lady Alice. God grant it may be true, but I fear you have been led away more by the wish than by the reality.

Jeffries. At any rate sign this paper, my child; it is a stay of proceedings, and the plea I make is the possibility of Harry being alive. Under no circumstances give up your homestead, you will be protected in all efforts made to remove you by force.

Lady Alice. My faithful guardian, how much I owe you. (Signs the paper.)

Jeffries. Farewell, my child, I will see you in the morning. It is late, you had better retire for the night.

Lady Alice. I cannot go yet, I am expecting Mr. Evremond.

Jeffries. Mr. Evremond must be a late visitor.

Lady Alice. He has not been attentive to-day. You know our marriage takes place on Thursday next. We are engaged to go this evening and sign the contract at the Notary's.

Jeffries. Is the Notary ready with the contract?

Lady Alice. He is, so he informs me by letter.

Jeffries. You can delay it until morning.

Lady Alice. There can be no delay in happiness. I will wait the rising of the sun for Mr. Evremond. I know he will come.

Jeffries. Adieu, Lady Alice, may you be happy.

Lady Alice. Good night, my guardian; if you by chance meet Evremond, say I am waiting for him.

Jeffries. For your sake, Lady Alice, I trust I may meet him.

(Exit. L. E.)

Enter *Lucy.* R. E.

Lucy. Madam, shall I place the light in your bed-chamber? you may wish to retire for the night.

Lady Alice. No, Lucy; I will remain in the library for some time. (Bell rings.) Go and admit Mr. Evremond. (Exit Lucy, L. E.) I feel a heaviness of heart since Mr. Jeffries has been here, but I know it will disappear as soon as Evremond arrives. (Calls.) Lucy. (Enter Lucy, L. E.) Who rang the bell just now?

Lucy. It was Victor's waiting man, who brought your bridal wreath and veil. (Exit, R. E.)

Lady Alice. They are sent home in time: my preparations for the marriage are now complete. Would Evremond were here to take me to the Notary's. (Looks at her watch.) Another delay; it is to late to go out; how dreadful is this suspense. (Rises and walks the stage.) Evremond, where are you? why do you absent yourself from me on the eve of our marriage? We parted last night to meet again to-night, and you are still away. (Bell rings.) At last he is here, and will crave my forgiveness. (Sits.) Shall I forgive him? yes, I will. (Enter Lucy, R. E.) Who was it that came in?

Lucy. It was Abigail, Madam.

Lady Alice. She is out very late. Lucy, bring my veil and wreath, and let me see if they are properly made. (Lucy goes out, R. E.) I would retire for the night, but Evremond might come, and be disappointed in not seeing me. (Lucy enters, R. E., with veil and wreath. Lady Alice puts on the wreath.)

Lucy. It becomes you well, madam.

Lady Alice. I hope Evremond will be pleased with it; take them away, Lucy, I will not look upon them again until my wedding day. Send Abigail to me. (Exit Lucy, R. E.) She may have met Evremond, and can probably give me news to relieve my mind. (Enter Abigail, R. E.) You were out late to-night, Abigail; did you see, or hear of Mr. Evremond?

Abigail. I did not see him, madam, but my neice, who lives on the road going to your cousin's, told me that he passed the house early this morning, on his way to Lady Mary Grey's.

Lady Alice. (Starting up.) Impossible! your neice is mistaken. Mr. Evremond at this time has no business with my cousin; besides, he would not have paid the visit without informing me. (Sits.)

Abigail. I heard other news, Lady Alice, and with your permission will repeat it.

Lady Alice. Speak out freely, Abigail; I am at this time a ready listener for truth or scandal.

Abigail. Well then, madam, to begin, my nephew, Charles, was early in the woods this morning, looking for his horse that had strayed away in the night. Hearing voices he looked around and saw squire Jeffries talking with two strange men. One of the men told the squire that your brother Harry was alive, and he would produce him on his return from Liverpool. Charles is certain the stranger is your brother.

Lady Alice. This, then, is the news Mr. Jeffries kept from me. You can go, Abigail. (Exit Abigail, R. E.) If the news should prove true, how Evremond will rejoice that the property is saved for me. (Bell rings.) At last he is come; it is late, but no matter, any excuse he may offer I will accept to have him with me.

Enter *Lucy.* L. E.

Lucy. Madam, Mr. Evremond was at the door and gave me this letter for you.

Lady Alice. (Rising.) Mr. Evremond at the door! Why did he not enter?

Lucy. I know not, Madam, but he seemed in haste.

Lady Alice. T'is strange, (opens the letter.) My God, what is this! (falls in the chair, her head resting on her arms on the table.)

The curtain drops slowly.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—*The Library Room of Lady Alice. The curtain rises showing Lady Alice in the same position as in the last scene of the previous act.*

Lady Alice. (Raising her head.) Is this a dream or is it reality? (Takes up the letter.) It is reality. I will take courage

and read the letter again. (Reads.) Lady Alice will forgive and forget one who ever esteemed her. Our marriage cannot take place. I have offered my hand to Lady Mary Grey, and to-morrow will be accepted as a suitor. May Lady Alice be ever happy.

Monday night. EVREMOND.

Cool and deliberate is this insult, and I do not think it is my cousin who has played me false. (Rising and speaking with force.) It is Evremond who is the false one, and he shall rue it to the end of his life. Oh! my God, what a condition am I now in: deceived, insulted and betrayed by one who should have been my protector! Who can I look to now for advice and aid to save my own, since Evremond has gone from me? I have walked this room the entire night brooding over my misfortunes. Has it bettered me? No. Will it better me to feed on my misery, (with force,) and kiss the hand that has smote me, or shall I rise superior to the arts of this gay deceiver and ward off the blow that is now crushing me? (Kneels.) Oh! my mother, now in Heaven, pray for me that I may have your energy of character; that I may have your resolution to overcome all misfortunes that are now upon me. (Rises and walks the stage.) Let me at once determine my course and be revenged on the perfidious man who has deserted me. For him I have spurned, trampled on all suitors, and treated all mankind for his sake with disdain. I am now a rejected, broken-hearted girl, with a large fortune at my command. Shall I die without marriage and leave my wealth to hospitals, parrots and monkeys; or shall I wed without love and leave my inheritance to children that I will teach to love a mother, who I trust, will devote a long life to their prosperity and happiness? Although rejected, I am not yet lost, and (with emphasis,) I will marry; yes, and marry one who shall be my tool and slave; he shall be an image set up to sustain my dignity before the world, and he shall be obedient. Never, never can I love and honor any man after such treatment as I have experienced; never shall any man love me more. I will force myself to be happy. (Appears gay.) Feasts and routs I will surfeit with and forget I ever loved. Happiness may come, (sad) but can it come with a life like this? I think not. It

will be the showy glitterings of the outside concealing the miseries within. I cannot be so deceitful; but oh! my God, what must I do (crying,) nature will have its course; I cannot help it. What if I should remain single, for the very name of man is loathsome to me; but the frightful picture of an old maid wallowing in cards and scandal, pampering overfed dogs and cats, sneered at by her acquaintance, reviled by her enemies—I can never come to that. Better give up liberty, wealth, liberty of thought even, perhaps, and all to a man I must despise than remain single to be pointed at as one rejected. (Vehemently.) I must and will marry!

Enter *Lucy.* L. E.

Lucy. You are unwell, Madam, shall I send for a Physician?

Lady Alice. No, Lucy, get some opium and take it to my room, (Exit Lucy L. E.) Expose my wretchedness to a prying world, never! I must have revenge: the dagger and poison are within my reach, but my religion forbids an act of self-destruction: besides how would I know he felt the blow?

Enter. *Abigail.* L. E.

Abigail. Madam, all the servants pity you and will do all in their power to aid you to be your own dear self again.

Lady Alice. Leave me. (Exit Abigail, L. E.) Pity from such a source! O Evremond, you know not the heart you have crushed. This letter says to be accepted to-morrow. (hopeful.) Then you are not married. (With force.) This match must be broken off. (With feeling.) You taught me to love you, my Evremond, and you shall not marry another. (Kneels.) Oh, Evremond, my girlhood's idol, my womanhood's pride, come back; yes, come back, I will forgive all. O come back, come back and be true to me again.

Enter. *Lucy.* L. E.

Lucy. Mr. Evremond is at the door and desires to see Lady Alice.

Lady Alice. (Rising and with indignation.) Away! I am not to be seen, my mind is now relieved. (Sits.) As I have loved, so will I hate. No man shall ever claim my love again, but I will marry to ease the revenge that sits heavy on my heart. (Rises and walks the stage.) A sudden thought flashes through my

mind, is it feasible? Yes! it must, it shall be: Lucy, send Abigail to me. (Exit Lucy, L. E.) Audacious man, to treat me as a child; he will find I can marry if it takes money to buy the husband. (Sits, when Abigail enters, L. E.) Abigail, you have brought me up from childhood, have ever been kind and faithful to me, I now wish you to do me a favor.

Abigail. I will do anything in the world for your ladyship, so dear and kind you have always been to me.

Lady Alice. Then go to the postern gate, you will see a young laboring man at work, bring him to me at the library at once. I will go to my room for a short time and arrange for his coming.

Abigail. Consider, Lady Alice, what you are doing? A young lady's reputation cannot be too sacred.

Lady Alice. (Passionately.) Begone! and do my bidding.

Abigail. Poor lady, she is indeed crazy, but my place is a good one. (Aside and exit, L. E.)

Lady Alice. (With force.) Taunted from a quarter I did not expect. (Sneeringly.) The servants pity me. (With force) I require the pity of no one. I have embarked in an enterprise and will take the venture. The young man looks superior to his menial occupation and was always respectful to me when I passed the crossing. I hear footsteps on the gallery, he must have been close at hand. I will go and arrange for this strange meeting. (Exit, R. E.)

(Enter Abigail with Merideth in his working clothes, L. E.)

Abigail. My Lady desires you to remain in this room; she will be with you presently. (Exit.)

Merideth. What can all this mean? Have I committed an offence and been sent for to be reprimanded, or is it one of those sudden and benevolent caprices, that ladies for their own amusement sometimes honor poor people? What a contrast is here to the squalid room I inhabit; happy is the one possessing all these luxuries. To be noticed by the great and beautiful heiress, almost too precious for a poor fellow to speak to, save with downcast eyes and humility of tongue is now my lot; even in this noble room replete with luxuries and elegance let me not forget my own honor as a man and the respect that is due to virtue in the noble lady of this house.

Enter. *Lady Alice.* R. E.

Lady Alice. I have sent for you, sir, pray be seated.

Merideth. I have been taught, Madam, not to sit in presence of ladies.

Lady Alice. Indeed, who gave you that lesson?

Merideth. My mother, Madam.

Lady Alice. You are very poor.

Merideth. I am poor, Madam, very; but I am honest.

Lady Alice. I do not suppose you are going to rob me. How would you like to be rich?

Merideth. (Bowing and turning to leave.) Madam.

Lady Alice. (Sits.) Stay; I have a great deal to say. I propose to bestow wealth on you—to make you rich—to make you in short a gentleman.

Merideth. (Surprised.) Madam!

Lady Alice. Speak not—listen; I have things to say still more surprising: hear, but do not interrupt me. Do you comprehend, young man, how this wealth and station must become yours? I will tell you; you must become—my husband.

Merideth. (In great surprise.) Madam!

Lady Alice. (Haughtily.) Perhaps I am rejected?

Merideth. Madam, I am but a poor fellow, earning a mere crust by the most degraded labor, but I have yet that in my keeping which is better in the eye of God than wealth and rank without: I mean, Madam, the honor of a man—a man who has never been debased, further than poverty can debase. I think I understand your ladyship. My own poverty is irksome enough; I can not bear the burden of a fine lady's shame.

Lady Alice. (Rising hastily.) Sirrah, what mean you? (Sorrowful.) Have I deserved this—(aside.)

Merideth. I crave your ladyship's pardon for what I have said.

Lady Alice. (Sits.) You are very bold, but you are mistaken. Listen: He who sought my hand and fortune, and whom I have loved from girlhood is false: by this time he has wedded another. My soul burns to be revenged, but the name and sight of man is hateful to me. In reality I will never take on myself the duties or affections of a wife. It is for this I sent for you. You

are poor: (sneering) it will be something for you to be raised out of the mire of poverty and dirt. The ceremony of marriage will confer on you some advantages which wealth can give. In the eyes of the world you will be my husband; to me you must bind yourself by a solemn oath, a written bond, never to be more than you are at this moment standing there, a beggar and an outcast. Remain here for a short time; deliberate on the advantages offered—an opportunity of fortune which few would reject in your circumstances. But make no mistake: you will be bound down strictly, and on the least attempt to alter the conditions of our contract, my wealth shall obtain a divorce, and you shall be cast forth to your original station. Remember, the title of my husband, the fortune of a gentleman; but from myself only the consideration I afford to my other paid and fed lacqueys. (Exit haughtily, R. E.)

Merideth. I am amazed! An offer of marriage from a rich and handsome lady, and one that I have long loved but dared not look upon: but the insolent speech is enough to crush the most humble. Lady Alice, whose image, purer and fairer far than the reality, has filled my bosom and unconsciously elevated my thoughts far above my station, must seek some tool better fitted for so humiliating a position; but there arises a picture which effectually chains me to this room, and holds me down as it were with chains of lead. (With feeling.) My saving angel! my guardian spirit! my poor, bed-ridden mother! whose tender love for me in spite of all our wretchedness appeals to me to not let go this golden chance fortune has so strangely offered to me.

(Enter Lucy, R. E. with a salver filled with rich viands and wines; puts it on the table.)

Lucy. Lady Alice desires you to take refreshments; she will not be long absent. (Exit, L. E.)

Merideth. Hunger and poverty drag down to earth the brightest and most soaring spirits. (Eats and drinks.) O my poor, dear, invalid mother, now stretched on your pallet in your poor garret, these delicacies and other comforts of life would be within your reach by the mock marriage of your son. For your sake, dear mother, I accept the heiress on her own terms.

Enter *Lady Alice.* R. E.

Lady Alice. Is your mind settled on my offer of marriage on the conditions I have named?

Merideth. It is, Madam.

Lady Alice. You will now procure suitable attire and return at once to this room, where you will find me (gives him a purse of gold.) I will have the contract between us prepared and ready for signature; after that I will inform you when the marriage ceremony is to take place. Your name?

Merideth. Paul Merideth, Madam.

Lady Alice. (Aside.) The name sounds well. (Loud.) My woman will conduct you through the garden into the park. You will return the same way. It is important that none of the servants should see you. (Rings, when Abigail enters, L. E.) Accompany Mr. Merideth into the park and be ready to receive him on his return. Send Lucy to summon Mr. Jeffries to be here without fail, and bring with him the Notary.

Abigail. Mr. Jeffries and the Notary are in the room below waiting your pleasure, Madam.

Lady Alice. 'Tis well, you may now go. (Exit Merideth and Abigail, L. E.) So far all has gone well, but I must see my old guardian and coax him into my new arrangement. (Rings, when Lucy enters, L. E.) Inform Mr. Jeffries I am ready to receive him. (Exit Lucy, L. E.) I know full well I am about to violate all those nice proprieties which fence in and invest women with the sanctity of respect; (with emphasis) but I have been trampled upon, and nought will do to right myself but revenge. (Walks the stage, when Jeffries enters, L. E.) Mr. Jeffries, I am glad you are here. I wish to consult you on my marriage with Mr. Merideth.

Jeffries. You mean Mr. Evremond, my dear.

Lady Alice. No, Mr Jeffries; Mr. Evremond has basely deserted me, and I have engaged to marry Mr. Merideth.

Jeffries. So soon! and pray, my dear, who is Mr. Merideth?

Lady Alice. A gentleman of this neighborhood.

Jeffries. I never heard of him. Have you known him for a long time?

Lady Alice. Yes, very long; (Asid)e since this morning.

Jeffries. I do not feel at liberty, my child, to give my consent to so hasty a marriage.

Lady Alice. (Indifferent.) It matters not, Mr. Jeffries.

Jeffries. Consider, Lady Alice, that what you are about to do will annihilate your own self esteem, and

Lady Alice. Stop, sir, I have well considered my course, and adopted the only means to be revenged on the base man who has cast aside the love confided to him, (with force) and trampled under foot the honor and obligation so dear to woman who has loved with a devotion like mine. There is such a thing as pride, Mr. Jeffries. I have inherited it from my parents, and no slight such as I now stagger under, although it may leave passionate regrets, shall ever be forgiven.

Jeffries. Do you love Mr. Merideth?

Lady Alice. I will never love again. I have stated the conditions of marriage to Mr. Merideth. He has accepted them. I am satisfied.

Jeffries. But I am not, Lady Alice; as your guardian, I protest against this marriage as ill advised and imprudent.

Lady Alice. You are my guardian, it is true, Mr. Jeffries; but I am of lawful age, and at any time you can be removed.

Jeffries. I have ever loved you as a child, Lady Alice; and know I am without authority to withhold from you any rights you may claim; but still I may reason with you, and try and convince you of your error by force of argument.

Lady Alice. Until Mr. Merideth arrives let us drop the subject.

Jeffries. You are expecting Mr. Merideth?

Lady Alice. I am; he is probably here now, as I see Abigail has returned.

Enter *Abigail, who goes to Lady Alice.* L. E.

Abigail. The young man is at the door.

Lady Alice. Admit him at once. (Exit Abigail, L. E., when Merideth enters, L. E., well dressed.) My gold has done wonders. (Aside.)

Jeffries. (Aside.) A fine looking man, truly.

Lady Alice. Is the Notary at hand, Mr. Jeffries?

Jeffries. He is coming in now.

Enter *Notary with papers, sits at the table.* L. E.

Lady Alice. Is the contract ordered for Thursday next ready, Mr. Notary?

Notary. It is, Madam; except that the names are not inserted.

Lady Alice. I have hastily drawn up certain conditions I wish inserted in the contract; here are also the names to go in (Writes the names and hands the contract to Jeffries.) Mr. Jeffries, will you read the conditions to Mr. Merideth.

Jeffries. (Reads.) That in consideration of a settlement of three thousand pounds per annum to be settled on Paul Merideth, he, the said Merideth, shall entirely forgo and resign the authority of a husband. He shall attend his wife in public, but in private separate suites of rooms shall separate them from the companionship of domestic life. (Hands the paper to the Notary, then sits at the table and writes.)

Lady Alice. Mr. Merideth, are you satisfied with the conditions I have inserted?

Merideth. Yes, Madam.

Lady Alice. Mr. Notary, I will sign the contract. Mr. Merideth will also sign.

Notary. It is ready, Madam. (Hands the paper, both sign it, she then takes it to the front.)

Lady Alice. (Aside.) Thank God! he can write, and a good round hand it is. (Returns the paper to the Notary.)

Jeffries. (Rising and looking excitedly from one to the other taking his snuff quite freely.) (Aside.) The man must be a fool to accept such conditions. (Hands the Notary a paper.)

Lady Alice. Have you a form of oath at hand, Mr. Notary?

Notary. I have, Madam. Shall I read it?

Lady Alice. Yes.

Notary. (Reads.) I solemnly swear that I will well and truly observe the conditions of the contract of marriage made with (inserts the name) Lady Alice Grey, and on any deviation made on my part from the said contract, I hereby agree to relinquish the allowance of (fills the blank) three thousand pounds per annum, and to consent to an immediate divorce of marriage.

I have filled up the blanks, Madam.

Lady Alice. That is proper. Do you agree to the oath, Mr. Merideth?

Merideth. I do, Madam, and will sign it. (Signs.)

Lady Alice. All that now remains is our marriage. In two days from this we will meet at the house of Mr. Jeffries. Our wedding will be a private one. For the present, I bid you adieu.

(Exit haughtily, R. E.)

Jeffries. For the happiness of both of you, Mr. Merideth, I trust Lady Alice may one day relent.

Merideth. If kindness and attention will bring it about, I will not be in fault.

Jeffries. Dine with me to-day, and we will discuss your future prospects. (Exeunt, L. E.)

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—*The Library Room of Jeffries. Susan discovered dusting and arranging the room. Sergeant Patrick sitting.*

Enter *Jeffries.* L. E.

Jeffries. Susan, has the Captain arrived?

Susan. No, sir, but his sergeant is here.

Jeffries. When did you arrive, Sergeant?

Patrick. This morning, sir. (rising and looking out.) I see the captain coming up the path to the house.

Jeffries. I hope the room is in order, Susan?

Susan. Yes, sir; I have been hard at work—Very hard (Aside)

Enter *Captain Grey.* R. E.

Jeffries. I am very glad to see you, captain.

Captain. Thank you kindly, Mr. Jeffries.

Jeffries. Where is my boy Harry you were to bring?

Captain He is not far off.

Jeffries. Take a seat at the table, captain. Susan, bring in some of the old Madeira, we will take a bottle, and when you bring me my boy we will have a dozen. (Susan goes out and returns with wine.)

Captain. You will take the dozen, Mr. Jeffries.

Jeffries. I hope so, captain.

Captain. Why are you so interested in young Harry Grey, Mr. Jeffries?

Jeffries. Why, because I saw him born; have many a time danced him on my knees; was the bosom friend of his father. Harry was a boy of fifteen when he left his native land. It killed his poor father, and his poor mother for years grieved his loss. I fear, captain, you are mistaken in Harry Grey being alive.

Captain. Do not be too certain of that, Mr. Jeffries. I told you I would bring to you young Harry Grey, and I intend to do so. Would you know him were you to see him now? Is there any sign or mark about his person to make him known to you? Recollect, my dear sir, there is a prize to be gained in being declared the legal heir of Sir Harry Grey, and many might impose on you as the true heir, and carry off the estate.

Jeffries. I am too wide awake to be deceived, captain; there was but one Harry Grey, and he was known by an imprint in India ink on his right arm of a cannon in position, pricked there by an old soldier named Merideth when Harry was a boy of ten; on his left arm was a natural—the print of a strawberry.

Captain. I may possibly find these signs (takes off his coat and bares his arms) Are these the marks you speak of?

Jeffries. (Rising hastily and taking Harry by the arm) What is this! you Harry Grey! You my boy Harry! You are deceiving me, sir!

Captain. That is not possible, sir. The proofs of my identity are in the marks you have described.

Jeffries. You are right, my boy. Oh, what joy is this! (Embracing Harry) Let me look at you. The very features of your father. (Sits in the chair, his head resting on his hand.)

Captain. O my dear Mr. Jeffries, I fear the surprise has been too much for you.

Jeffries. It is you, Harry; let me embrace you again. (Embracing.) Now I am all right, and Harry, we will have a jubilee on your return. Susan, go tell Lady Alice her brother

is found. No, stay. Get all the people on the place together, and have the fattest ox roasted. I feel like dancing for joy. (Dances about the stage.) Tol de rol, tol de rol, tol de rol. This is the happiest day of my life. (Sits.) Now, Harry, let us finish the dozen.

Captain. Not to-day, Mr. Jeffries; but I will take another glass with you. (They drink.)

Jeffries. Tell me what you have been doing these twenty years, that we did not hear from you?

Captain. I have been in the army, stationed in the East Indies, since I left England.

Jeffries. What put you in the army?

Captain. Necessity. I enlisted as a common soldier and by good conduct worked myself up to a captaincy. Now tell me about my sister, as I have learned one was born after I left the country.

Jeffries. Your sister was engaged to marry Evremond, but the fortune hunter presuming your sister would lose her estate, declined the marriage, which so enraged her that out of revenge she married Paul Merideth.

Captain. Who is Paul Merideth?

Jeffries. A man with good principles. Evremond had none.

Captain. Enough; let us pay her a visit.

Jeffries. At once, my boy. Sergeant, take a glass of wine with Susan to the safe return of the captain. I am ready, Harry. (Exit with captain, R. E.)

Sergeant. I will take a dozen, my old boy. Come, Susan, a glass with you.

Susan. I never drank a glass of wine in my life.

Sergeant. I will teach you. This is the prelude. (Kisses her.)

Susan. You are very bold, sir.

Sergeant. I can't help it; I love you.

Susan. Love me! you must be crazy, sir.

Sergeant. Do you think people crazy when they love?

Susan. Not when they love the right one.

Sergeant. You are the right one, Susan.

Susan. That is very strange. (Bell rings.) The housekeeper rings for me, sir. I will ask Mr. Jeffries to let you come and see me.

Patrick. Do so; my dear. I will come to-night, with or without permission. (Exit, R. E.)

Susan. Is this me, Susan, kissed by a man, or is it somebody else; well it's not so bad after all, he only took one, no harm in that I am sure, besides he is a soldier and girls like to be kissed by soldiers. I am certain I will dream about him to-night. (Exit, L. E.)

SCENE 2.—*The Sitting Room of Lady Alice.*

Enter *Lady Alice and Lucy.* R. E.

Lady Alice. Lucy, you will say to any visitors that I am fatigued and beg their indulgence.

Lucy. I will obey your orders, Madam. (Exit, L. E.)

Lady Alice. I have drank deeply of dissipation and wearisome were the balls, the ridottes, the fetes, the parties at faro, where I dragged my reluctant husband to. (With force.) I will quit dissipation. (Sits by the table.) I have no longer any relish for it. My husband seems displeased but never utters an unkind word. Husband, did I say. Yes, Mr. Merideth is my kind and devoted husband, but he observes our contract too faithfully. Oh! that contract, why did I make it so binding, but I thought I could never love again, I am mistaken. I love my husband. I plunged into dissipation to forget Evremond; he is forgotten, but it was not dissipation caused the change. It was the devotion of a kind husband to his wife, (Enter Lucy with flowers, L E.) Another bouquet, Lucy, and this more fragrant than the others. Who brought this one?

Lucy. I know not, Madam, I found it on the table in the corridor. (Exit, L. E.)

Lady Alice. 'Tis strange, every day flowers of the choicest kinds are sent to me and I am in ignorance of the donor. There is devotion in flowers. (In a low voice.) They mean love. Can I, a married woman devoted to my husband, receive them in this way, I think not, self-respect should cause me to set them aside, but with a woman's curiosity I will put a woman's wit to work to find out the giver. (Opens the bouquet.) Here are the fragrant pinks, as white as snow, they mean fidelity, how sweet they are, and the jessamine, white, yellow and the cape, the

first is amiability, the others (poor fellow) mean jealousy; how well they fill out: but look at the roses, the whites are beautiful and in abundance, they are for young brides; here is a bunch of fragrant ones in the centre with a paper carefully tied on, that paper may reveal the secret. Let me first read the flowers. The bud friendship, the half blown, love. He is getting on finely, the full blown and plenty of them, marriage, you are too late, Mr. giver; I have a husband. (Laughing.) Let me see what else there is from my admirer. Anemone, that means betrayed love. (Shaking her head) You are treading on dangerous ground, sir. Now comes something better, the acacia, pure affection, that is good. Heliotrope, eternal love, finishes my work. Now let me read the paper before I tear it up, as it must be a love letter. (Opens the paper.) Love verses as I live and in my husband's writing; I know it so well. (Laughing.) How disappointed some married ladies would be at such a result, I am not. It is plain, Mr. Merideth, that you love your wife, and still plainer that your wife loves you.

Enter *Abigail.* L. E.

Abigail. Madam, Mr. Merideth desires to be admitted to your presence.

Lady Alice. Bid my husband enter. (Exit Abigail, L. E.) I must teach him not to make his visits so formal.

Enter *Merideth.* L. E.

Merideth. (Agitated.) Madam, I have come to—to ask a favor, and to make a confession. Though I loved you long, long ere you took me, a poor wretch, from the streets; yet my love is no longer to be borne. If I stay here I must go mad or die. Oh Madam, that contract! think you I would have signed it, but for the poor mother who bore me, and who was perishing in my sight, when you raised me from the depths of poverty? Forgive my love; I can not help it. I have come to request you will do me one parting favor—purchase me a commission. I would be a soldier, Madam, my father was one. I can live Madam, on my pay; your allowance I request permission to relinquish.

Lady Alice. Wherefore? Oh God, this is too much.—(Aside.)

Merideth. I can no longer subsist on your bounty. I have

made much progress of late, Madam; your wit and accomplishments stimulated me. Forgive me, Madam, and sometimes deign to cast a thought on him who adores you silent and hopeless.

Lady Alice. (Aside) My dear husband!

Merideth. I fear I have offended you, Madam.

Lady Alice. You have not. (Aside) Oh, I could cast myself at his feet and acknowledge my love. But that fatal oath! (Loud) Leave me now, Mr. Merideth; I will have the commission sent to you, but you must not, nay, you shall not relinquish the allowance.

Merideth. As you will, Madam; but my pay will support me.

Lady Alice. It matters not, that part of the contract must not be violated.

Merideth. I will obey you, Madam; farewell! (Exit, L. E.)

Lady Alice. Farewell, dear husband! you have won my love; now win a name to deserve it.

Enter *Lucy.* L. E.

Lucy. Madam, Mr. Jeffries and a strange gentleman are waiting in the library to see you. Mr. Jeffries says the stranger is your brother.

Lady Alice. My brother! I have no brother.

Lucy. Yes, Madam; this is the one they thought was drowned.

Lady Alice. Indeed! then the predictions of Mr. Jeffries are correct. God grant it may be true. I have lost a husband, but find a brother. Go with me to the library, Lucy, you may be wanted. (Exeunt, L E.)

ACT V.

A LAPSE OF TWO YEARS.

SCENE 1.—*A Room in the House of Lady Alice. Enter Jeffries with a Letter.* R. E.

Jeffries. What can Lady Alice mean by writing: "Come in great haste, or you will be too late." I hope she is not dangerously ill. Poor girl, she grieves at the absence of her husband. He will soon be back, when all will be made right.

Enter *Lady Alice.* L. E.

Lady Alice. Mr. Jeffries, I have sent for you to draw up my will. It is two years to-day since my dear husband left. I cannot long survive his absence. I wish to leave him all my property.

Jeffries. You have seen Mr. Merideth's promotion as colonel, have you not?

Lady Alice. I read it in the gazette, but not a line have I had from him.

Jeffries. Did you request him to write?

Lady Alice. I did not; but he might have known how rejoiced I would be to get his letters.

Jeffries. No doubt he would like to have heard from you.

Lady Alice. I will write to him at once, confess my love, and beg him to quit the army.

Jeffries. It is too late, he will soon be home. I see by the gazette his arrival in a transport

Lady Alice. Home, do you say? my husband has no home; I have no home. A wife is without a home estranged from her husband.

Jeffries. You are mistaken, Lady Alice: you have a home and a good one, with all the comforts of life at your command.

Lady Alice. I would give up all to recall that fatal oath. Mr. Jeffries, you know not how I love my husband. The last two years has been a blank. Why did you consent to the oath? you were my guardian, and the one I trusted most for my happiness.

Jeffries. Very true, my child: I found you bent on marriage, and what could I do. You would marry and you did marry.

Lady Alice. I did marry it is true, and God has blessed me with a good and true husband. It is the fatal oath that cowers me down and makes me feel an insignificant creature. (Walks the stage excited.) Oh, my God! what is to be done? a husband coming home and no wife to receive him. Mr. Jeffries, you were wrong in agreeing to the contract of marriage; that was bad enough, but the oath binding the contract was worse. Would you had killed me at once. (Sits.)

Jeffries. Lady Alice: you know you married to be revenged on Evremond: you acted wisely in marrying Merideth: you were of lawful age; I tried to check you but without effect.

Lady Alice. I did marry it is true, to be revenged on Evremond, and thought then I could never love again; but two years' absence, with a fatal oath between us, cannot make me forget the duty a wife owes a husband, when treated as I have been.

Jeffries. Why I thought you were happy in your marriage?

Lady Alice. Happy indeed! How can I be happy under an oath that deprives me of the rights and duties of a wife. I feel as if I would die before the return of Mr. Merideth.

Jeffries. Die! you will do no such thing, Lady Alice; you love your husband, and you will live long enough to make the poor fellow's heart ache worse than it does now.

Lady Alice. I will be ever kind to him.

Jeffries. I will vouch for his kindness to you. All his letters to me are filled with devotion for the woman he loves. But he will keep his oath.

Lady Alice. O say not so, Mr. Jeffries.

Jeffries. You would not have the man perjure himself.

Lady Alice. I would not, but he can find a way of getting round it. You are a lawyer and can instruct him. I don't think I meant such an oath when the Notary wrote it down.

Jeffries. You would forgive the Notary, provided he had written it in error.

Lady Alice. (Joyfully.) Forgive him! yes indeed, and will reward him. Say there is hope!

Jeffries. There is.

Lady Alice. (Clasping her hands.) Heaven be praised for that kind expression! (Shout outside.) What noise is that? I fear it betokens ill luck.

Jeffries That is a shout of joy, as you will now see. (Opens the door.)

(Enter Merideth, R. E., with Capt. Grey, servants crowding behind.)

Lady Alice. (Running to Merideth.) Oath or no oath you are my dear husband. (Embracing.)

Merideth. My dearest wife (Kissing her.) That fatal oath. One more embrace, my dear wife, and I part from you forever.

Lady Alice. You shall not leave me, you are my dear husband. I will cling to you and be only separated by death.

Merideth. I must go. I cannot bring perjury on my soul!

Jeffries. Perjury, fiddlestick; talk of perjury in matters of pure love. (Walks about excited, taking snuff freely.) I, stupid, prosy old lawyer though I be, foresaw this hour when I was manufacturing that rigmarole of a deed, you heard me read it once; hear it again. (Takes up the deed.) I just introduced a clause which will set all to rights. The oath was registered with a saving clause, that if both parties mutually agreed to hereafter renounce the conditions of the deed, and become man and wife actually, instead of a mere legal fiction, the said agreement was by mutual consent, to be null and void.

Lady Alice. (Falling into the arms of Merideth.) Oh! my God, what happiness is this! all my dreams of love are here centered.

Jeffries. Come, Harry, let us leave the married couple to their fate; I have made them happy, which they did not expect. All on this estate must be made happy to-night, if feasting and dancing will do it. We will have a long sitting. Harry; and Merideth, when you tire of courtship, come and join us, provided your wife be willing. (The servants retire, R. E.)

Merideth. What say you wife, to this invitation?

Lady Alice. Do as you please, my dear, it is a restriction over you I do not claim.

Merideth. Then I will stay with you.

Lady Alice. Mr. Jeffries, that is an answer all good husbands will give. (Laughing.) Recollect we have a lapse of two years to go over, my tongue has been tied since that period and I claim a special privilege belonging to my sex, to give it a free license whenever in the humor.

Jeffries. Heaven protect your poor husband!

Captain. Amen to that.

Lady Alice. Rail on, you will tire first. (Enter Sergeant and Susan, R. E.) But whom have we here?

Susan. It is me, Lady Alice. (Cortseying.) You are happy, I wish to be happy too.

Lady Alice. How can I serve you, Susan?

Susan. By getting Mr. Jeffries to grant his permission to my marriage with Sergeant Patrick.

Lady Alice. Do you hear that, Mr. Jeffries?

Jeffries. More trouble in camp it seems: what's the matter with you, Susan?

Susan. Nothing, sir, except that Sergeant Patrick loves me and I love Sergeant Patrick.

Jeffries. Is that all?

Susan. That is enough to get married on, sir.

Jeffries. What do you want to marry a soldier for? the scamps have wives in every port.

Sergeant. You mean sailors, sir.

Jeffries. I believe you are right, Sergeant. You have my consent to marry Susan, and if you don't make her a good husband, I will have you tried by court martial and shot.

Sergeant. I take all the chances, Squire.

(Exit with Susan, R. E.)

Jeffries. Let us go now, Harry.

Lady Alice. Stop, Mr. Jeffries and brother Harry; for reasons I will hereafter give, I wish you to go with us to the library, where the scenes of my trouble began, and thanks to your foresight ended. It was there I vowed to marry for revenge. I kept my word and by so doing took a chance in the lottery of life. It was a terrible chance, but (taking Merideth's hand) I have drawn the highest prize.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

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